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My name is Johanna "Jody" Paniagua. I graduated from Mac Murray College in 1988 with a BSc in Physical Education and from Saint Louis University in 1992 with a BSc in Physical Therapy.

My first position was at the Rehab Institute of New Orleans, where for 6 years I specialized in Spinal Cord Injury/Dysfunction (SCI) rehabilitation. I was the chief Physical Therapist for the Louisiana State University Reciprocating Gait Orthoses Research Program. Then I transferred to the Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Hospital in Oklahoma City for 6 months to assist in the development of an SCI program. In 1998 I moved to Phoenix and the Banner Hospitals and St. Joseph's Hospital/Barrow Neurological Institute SCI Service and focused on wheelchair seating. I returned to St. Louis in 2008 and joined The Rehabilitation Institute. I joined the St. Louis VA SCI Service in March 2010.

My connection to veterans and wheelchair sports was established when I participated in the National Wheelchair Veterans Games in Puerto Rico in 1999 and San Antonio in 2000 as an official for wheelchair rugby and personal care attendant to a participating Veteran. I am also involved with the National Wheelchair Basketball Association's Athletes. I have officiated for the US Quad Rugby Association since 1992. I am a Handicapped Scuba Association Buddy Diver.

I have taught PT students about SCI as a guest lecturer at Louisiana State University in New Orleans, AT Still University in Phoenix, and Washington University in St. Louis.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Joe Jackson Foundation, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life of children and young adults with SCI.

I look forward to providing state-of-the-art rehabilitation for the unique and changing needs of our Veterans. Assisting them to be as independent as possible and how to "live" and be "alive" continues to be the most rewarding part of my job.

I can be reached in my office (GN34) or at 314-652-4100 or 800-228-5459, ext. 6-4506.